at least one receptacle for receiving said fluid from said surgical site, said conduit communicating with said receptacle;

a source of vacuum;

a vacuum controller interposed between said vacuum source and said receptacle, said vacuum controller controlling the duration of time said receptacle is exposed to vacuum from said vacuum source; and

a pump for supplying surgical fluid to said cavity.

Please cancel Claims 2-4, 9-12, 15, 18 and 21.

5. **(Amended)** The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein said vacuum controller has a timer for measuring the time that said valve is maintained in said first position and said second position, said timer permitting said vacuum controller to maintain said valve in said second position for a duration of time sufficient for said vacuum sensor to sense said vacuum level in said at least one receptacle when isolated from said vacuum source.

13. **(Amended)** Apparatus for controlling a volume of surgical fluid present in a cavity in a body of a patient during surgery, comprising:

a conduit to the cavity for conducting the surgical fluid therefrom;

at least one receptacle for receiving the fluid from the surgical site, said conduit communicating with said receptacle;

a source of vacuum;

a vacuum controller interposed between said vacuum source and said receptacle, said vacuum controller controlling the duration of time said receptacle is

exposed to vacuum from said vacuum source;

a vacuum sensor for sensing a vacuum level approximating that in said at least one receptacle, said vacuum controller controlling a duration of time said at least one receptacle is exposed to vacuum based upon data from said vacuum sensor, said vacuum controller comparing the data from said vacuum sensor to a preselected vacuum setpoint and adjusting the time of exposure up or down as required to achieve the preselected vacuum setpoint; said vacuum controller having a valve and valve actuator for positioning said valve, said valve having at least two positions, a first of which places said vacuum source and said at least one receptacle in communication and a second of which isolates said vacuum source from said at least one receptacle; at least one other conduit leading to a surgical drape; said vacuum source adapted to apply suction to said at least one other conduit, said at least one other conduit being in communication with said valve, such that said valve controls application of vacuum from said vacuum source to said at least one other conduit; said valve having a plurality of ports and a first internal passageway therein which is selectively positionable by said valve actuator to connect and disconnect a selected one of said plurality of ports to another one of said plurality of ports, said valve having a first port connected to said vacuum source and a second port connected to said at least one receptacle, said first port and said second port being selectively connectable to each other by said first internal passageway, said valve having a third port connected to said vacuum sensor, such that when said valve is in said first position said first port and said second port are in communication with each other and when said valve is in said second position, said third port and said second port are in communication with each other; said valve having a fourth port connected to said at least one other conduit and having a second internal passageway, said fourth port being connected to said first port via said

second internal passageway when said valve is in said second position, and said third port being connected to said second port via said first internal passageway when said valve is in said second position.

16. **(Amended)** The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said vacuum from said vacuum source is shared between said receptacle and said drape by sequential timed distribution thereof by said valve alternately switching between said first position and said second position under the control of said vacuum controller.

17. **(Amended)** The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein said sharing of vacuum is prioritized by an algorithm to favor the acquisition of a setpoint vacuum level in said receptacle over the application of vacuum to said drape.

19. **(Amended)** The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein said at least one receptacle includes a plurality of receptacles connected together by means for conveying fluid thereto.

20. **(Amended)** The apparatus of Claim 13, further comprising a flow-back filter positioned between said vacuum controller and said at least one receptacle.

22. **(Amended)** The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said pump is adjustable to provide a selected output based upon a pressure approximating that present in said cavity.